

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Landmark/District:	Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District	(X) Agenda
Address:	923-925 5th Street NW	() Consent
		(X) Concept
Meeting Date:	March 25, 2021	(X) Alteration
Case Number:	21-056	(X) New Construction
		() Demolition

Kline Operations, working with architect Peter Fillat, seeks on-going conceptual design review for construction of an 11-story condominium building with ground level retail that incorporates the historic facade of 925 5th Street.

Property Description

Architect W. Ellis Groben designed 925-929 5th Street in 1946 for the Union Provision and Distribution Company. It was to house a Jewish meat market and distribution center with a refrigeration plant and was renamed the Director Company after the owner's surname. The front façade is all that remains of the original building which still has the original polychrome panels designed by concrete specialist John J. Earley. The panels once read "Director's Deli – Deliciously Different Corned Beef," some of which is still faintly visible today under a later coat of paint. The façade dates from the period of significance for the Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District (1869-1946), and HPO worked with the owner several years ago to ensure that the façade was properly braced so that it could be retained as part of this streetscape and incorporated into a new construction project.

Previous Reviews

In December 2020 the applicant presented this project to HPRB, with a new direction in design and use group from previous concepts presented to the Board in March 2018 (design by Peter Fillat) and September 2016 (design by WDG architects). The revised project for 49 condominiums, with retail space on the first level, and 9 parking spaces at the rear, featured an all glass front façade with alternating projecting bays and glass balconies and slot windows on the side elevations.

At the December meeting, the Board did not vote on the concept design but had the following comments:

1. The base element is not clearly defined. The previous designs (specifically the WDG parti from September 2016) more clearly provided a base, middle and top--providing some separation from the historic building and the new construction--which was more successful. The 2nd and 3rd story need to relate more to the historic building than to the upper levels in order to create a base.
2. The design does not relate to the context of this row and the adjacent facades. There needs to be a stronger datum line - referencing the 2- and 3-story buildings in this row.
3. The number and arrangement of the bays are chaotic and overwhelm the façade, taking attention away from the historic façade; several Board members suggested eliminating the bays altogether.

4. The previous scheme (March 2018) was more successful in tying the historic architecture with the new structure through simple yet contrasting colors and materials. The Board expressed concern about a full glass facade; a solution with more solid to void would be more compatible on this row.
5. The existing storefront isn't well integrated with the rest of the floors. This composition of the base should inform the upper floors in some way while also having its own identity.

Revised Proposal

The revised scheme includes several refinements. The most successful revision is the addition of the strong brick border along the 2nd floor which helps frame the upper floors, setting it apart from the first floor, and also creating a strong datum line with the surrounding 2-story brick buildings. On the side elevations, brick has been introduced between the windows on each floor to break down the scale of the multi-story slot windows.

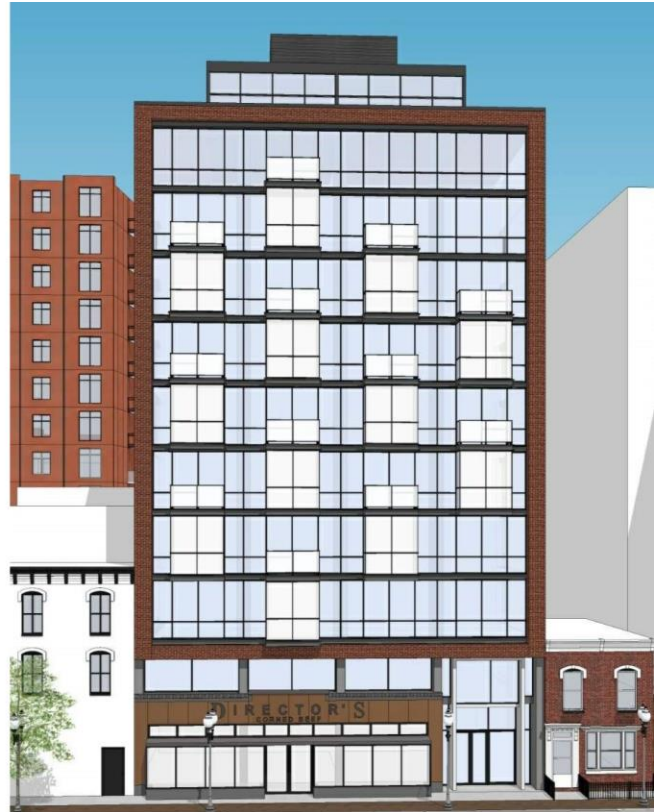
On the front elevation the architect prepared numerous studies of the size, location, and number of bays. This revised scheme reduces the depth of the bays from 4' to 3', and slightly changes the composition of the bay pattern from the previous submission.

Evaluation

The revised scheme results in modest improvements, creating a stronger sense of base and separation of the historic façade from the tower above. However, many of the Board's comments from the December 2020 review remain unaddressed and it was HPO's understanding that the Board was looking for a more fundamental rethinking of the design to improve its compatibility with the Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District. HPO seeks the Board's guidance as to whether the revised concept is sufficient in addressing its concerns, or whether a more fundamental redesign is required.

Regardless of the direction of the design, the applicant should also include information in the permit submission as to how the polychrome panels will be removed, protected, and cleaned, and continue to work with the HPO's archaeologist to complete the archaeological survey required on this site.

Staff contact: Kim Elliott



Current proposal: March 2021 (architect: Peter Fillat)



Previous proposal: Dec 2020 (architect: Peter Fillat)



HPRB approved – May 2018 (architect: Peter Fillat)



HPRB approved – Sept. 2016 (WDG architects)